

THE ESSENCE OF

ZEN



An Anthology of Quotations



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An Anthology of Quotations

Compiled by Maggie Pinkney

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CONTENTS

Introduction

The Essence of Zen

Look to This Day

Everyday Zen

Take Ten

The Zen of Change

The Zen of Nature

The Great Oneness

Zen Enlightenment



INTRODUCTION

Zen is about standing back, letting go – and getting in touch with the peace and wisdom that lies within us all. It's about the discovery of the sacred in the midst of the humble and ordinary. About not getting caught up in the rat-race and the endless search for material possessions.

With its emphasis on looking within, enjoying the moment, detachment and compassion, Zen offers a refreshingly different slant on life. To experience Zen is a bit like looking through the other end of the telescope.

Meditation, as practiced by Buddha, and brought to Japan by the twelfth-century monk Dogen, is at the heart of Zen.

In fact, the word 'Zen' is Japanese for meditation as well as for the school of philosophy surrounding it. However, it is not necessary to be a serious practitioner of Zen to benefit from the collected wisdom of this anthology. Gathered from a wide range of sources, from ancient Zen masters to modern American Zen followers – and poets, philosophers and writers from many other nations – these quotations provide insights that give a fresh new perspective to us all, and can be incorporated into our thinking, regardless of our religion or culture.

The inspirational thoughts contained in this book will help you to see life through 'Zen eyes', freeing you from fruitless regrets, desires and anxieties – and helping you to appreciate every moment of your life on earth.

Maggie Pinkney, 2005

THE ESSENCE OF ZEN



Zen in its essence
is the art of seeing
into the nature of one's being,
and it points the way
from bondage to freedom.

D T SUZUKI

Outside teaching; apart from tradition.

Not founded on words and letters.

Pointing directly to the human mind.

Seeing into one's nature and attaining

Buddhahood.

Walking is Zen, sitting is Zen.

Whether talking or remaining silent,

Whether moving or standing quiet,

The Essence itself is ever at ease.



Refraining from all evil,
not clinging to birth and death,
working in deep compassion
for all sentient beings,
respecting those over you
and pitying those below you,
without any detesting or desiring,
worrying or lamentation –
this is what is called Buddha.
Do not search beyond it.

Calm in quietude is not real calm.

When you can be calm in the midst of activity,
this is the true state of nature.

Happiness in comfort is not real happiness.

When you can be happy
in the midst of hardship,
then you see the true potential of
the mind.

Do not seek the truth.
Only cease to cherish opinions.

—Lao Tzu



A primary aim of Zen
is the uncovering of what is known
as inherent knowledge ... It is said that
the ignorant are obstructed by ignorance,
while intellectuals are obstructed
by intellectual knowledge.
One way of getting past these obstacles
and approaching inherent knowledge
is to let go of whatever comes to mind.

~~Zen~~ mind is not Zen mind.

That is, if you are attached to ~~Zen~~ mind,
then you have a problem,
and your way is very narrow.

Throwing away ~~Zen~~ mind is correct Zen mind.

Only keep the question,
'What is the best way of helping other people?'

SEUNG SAHN

One who excels in traveling
leaves no wheel tracks.

One who excels as a warrior
does not appear formidable.

One who excels in fighting
is never aroused in anger.

One who excels in defeating his enemy
does not join issue.

One who excels in employing others
humbles himself before them.

LOOK TO THIS
DAY



Look to this day.

In it lie all the realities and verities of existence,
the bliss of growth, the splendor of action,
the glory of power.

For yesterday is but a dream and
tomorrow is only a vision.

But today, well-lived, makes every yesterday
a dream of happiness and every tomorrow
a vision of hope.

SANSKRIT PROVERB

Each soul must meet
the morning sun,
the new sweet earth,
and the Great Silence.

ORHYESHA (A HARLES) (ALEXANDER EASTMAN)



An inch of time is an inch of gold: treasure it.

Appreciate its fleeting nature;
misplaced gold is easily found,
misspent time is lost forever.

LOY CHING-YUEN

Past and future are illusions.
They exist only in the present,
which is what there is
and all that there is.

ALAN WATTS

To see a World in a grain of Sand
And a heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour.

WILLIAM BLAKE

When I begin to sit
with the dawn in solitude,
I begin to really live.
It makes me treasure
every single moment of life.

GLORIA VANDERBILT

Nothing is worth more
than this day.

JOHANN VON GOETHE

Ask not what tomorrow may bring,
but count as blessing
every day that Fate allows you.

HORACE

Do not dwell in the past.
Do not dream of the future.
Concentrate the mind
on the present moment.

BUDDHA

You have to live on this earth
twenty-four hours of daily time.
Out of it you have to spin health, pleasure,
money, content, respect and
the evolution of your immortal soul.
Its right use, most effective use,
is a matter of the highest urgency
and of the most thrilling actuality.
All depends on that.
We shall never have any more time.

ARNOLD BENNETT

He who binds to himself a joy,
Does the winged life destroy;
But he who kisses joy as it flies
Lives in Eternity's sunrise.

WILLIAM BUTLER

Happy the man, and happy he alone,
He who can call today his own:
He who, secure within, can say
Tomorrow do thy worst,
for I have lived today.

JOHN DRYDEN

O gift of God! a perfect day,
Whereon no man should work but play,
Whereon it is enough for me,
Not to be doing but to be.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

A lifetime is not what's between
The moments of birth and death.
A lifetime is one moment
Between my two little breaths.
The present, the here, the now,
That's all the life I get,
I live each moment in full,
In kindness, in peace, without regret.

CHADE MENC

We are here and it is now.

Further than that,
all human knowledge
is moonshine.

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Write in your heart
that every day
is the best day of the year.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

As yesterday is history
and tomorrow may never come,
I have resolved from this day on,
I will do all the business I can honestly,
have all the fun I can reasonably,
do all the good I can do willingly,
and save my digestion by
thinking pleasantly.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

When you arise in the morning
Give thanks for the morning light.
Give thanks for your life and strength.
Give thanks for your food.
And give thanks for the joy of living.
And if perchance you see
no reason to give thanks
Rest assured the fault is yours.

AMERICAN INDIAN SAYING

To see the things of the present moment
is to see all that is now,
all that has been since time began,
and all that shall be unto the world's end;
for all things are of
one kind and one form.

MASSACHUSETTS

Out of Eternity

the new Day is born;

Into Eternity at night will return.

THOMAS CARLYLE

EVERYDAY ZEN



Sit
Rest
Work.

Alone with yourself,
Never weary.
On the edge of the forest
Live joyfully,
Without desire.

BUDDHA

There is no place in Buddhism
for using effort.

Just be ordinary and nothing special.

Relieve your bowels, pass water,
Put on your clothes and eat your food.
When you're tired, go and lie down.
Ignorant people will laugh at me,
But the wise will understand.



Each morning sees some task begun,
Each evening sees it close.
Something attempted, something done,
Has earned a night's repose.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

I got up at sunrise and was happy,
I walked, and was happy;
I roamed the forests and hills,
I wandered in the valleys,
I read. I did nothing,
I worked in the garden,
I picked fruit,

I helped in the house and happiness
followed me everywhere —
happiness which could not be referred
to any definite object,
but dwelt entirely within myself
and which never left me a single instant.

JEAN-JAQUES ROUSSEAU

There are two ways to live your life.
One is as though nothing is a miracle.
The other is as though everything
is a miracle.

ALBERT EINSTEIN

There are
no mundane things outside of Buddhism,
and there is
no Buddhism outside of mundane things.

—BUDDHA



Either hoeing the garden
or washing bottles at the well,
making soup for a sick man
or listening to someone else's child,
studying books, stacking logs,
writing to the local paper
or pulling that stubborn lamb into our world,
I hear the song which carried my neighbor
from one thing to the next:
Earth feeds us out of her empty bowl.

PETER LEVITT

Teach us delight in
simple things.

RIICHARD KIPLING

To have some deep feeling about Buddhism
is not the point;
we just do what we should do,
like eating supper and going to bed.

This is Buddhism!

SUZUKI ROSHI

Washing dishes
is not only a Zen exercise,
but you get the dishes
clean too.

ADRIENNE SOULEY

The secret of seeing things as they are
is to take off our colored spectacles.

That being-as-it-is,
with nothing extraordinary about it,
nothing wonderful, is the great wonder.

The ability to see things normally
is no small thing;
to be really normal is the unusual.
In that normality begins to bubble up
inspiration.

The miracle
is not to fly in the air,
or to walk on the water:
but to walk on the earth.

CHINESE PROVERBS

Zen is an exploration of reality.
It is about your life in the place
where you live, Here and Now.
It is this immediacy
that gives it its strength.

ROBERT ALLEN

I drink tea
and forget the world's noises.

CELESTIAL SAVOR



The first cup moistens my lips and throat,
The second cup breaks my loneliness,
The third cup searches my inmost being ...
The fourth cup raises a slight perspiration –
All the wrongs of life
pass away through my pores.
At the fifth cup I am purified;
The sixth cup calls me
to the realms of immortals.

The seventh cup – ah,
but I could take no more!
I only feel the breath
of cool wind that rises in my sleeves.
Where is Heaven?
Let me ride on this sweet breeze
and waft away thither.

CHINESE POEM



What a delight it is
When I blow away the ash,
To watch the crimson
Of the glowing fire
And hear the water boil.

TACHIBANA AKEMI

Zen

is not some kind of excitement,
but merely concentration
on our usual everyday routine.

SHRUNKYU SUZUKI

TAKE TEN



Arranging a bowl of flowers in the morning
can give a sense of quiet to a crowded day –
like writing a poem or saying a prayer.
What matters is that one be for a time
inwardly attentive.

ANNE MORROW LINDBERGH

The quieter you become
The more you are able
to hear.

ZEN SAYING.



The most valuable thing
we can do for the psyche, occasionally,
is to let it rest, wander,
live in the changing light of a room,
not try to be or do
anything whatever.

MAY SARTON

Within yourself
is a stillness and a sanctuary
to which you can retreat at any time
and be yourself.

HERMANN HESSE

Solitude is freedom.

It's an anchor, an anchor in the void.

You're anchored to nothing,
and that's my definition of freedom.

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There is a silence
into which the world cannot intrude.
There is an ancient peace
you carry in your heart
and have not lost.

A COURSE IN MIRACLES

Silence is a friend
who will never betray.

CONFIDENCE

Let us not therefore
go hurrying about
and collecting honey, bee-like,
buzzing here and there impatiently
from a knowledge of what is to be arrived at.
But let us open our leaves like a flower,
and be passive and receptive.

JOHN KEATS

Meditating deeply ...
reach the depth of the source.

Branching streams
cannot compare to this source!
Sitting alone in a great silence,
even though the heavens turn
and the earth is upset,
you will not even wink.

NYOGEN SENZAKI

I was utterly alone
with the sun and the earth.
Lying down on the grass,
I spoke in my soul to the earth,
the sun, the air,
and the distant sea ...

RICHARD JEFFRIES

I am sure of this,
that by going much alone
a man will get more
of a noble courage in thought and word
than from all the wisdom
in books.

ROBERT ROBERTSON

Bitter rain soaks the pile of kindling twigs.

The night so cold and still the lamp flame
hardly moves.

Clouds condense and drench our stone
walled hut.

Broken rushes clog the reed gate's way.

The stream gurgles, a torrent in its bed.

That's all we hear. Only rarely comes a
human voice.

But oh, how priceless is this peace of mind
that fills us

As we sit on our heels and put on another
Chan monk's robe!

HSU YUN

Training began with children,
who were taught to sit still and enjoy it.
They were taught to use their organs of smell,
to look where there was
apparently nothing to see,
and to listen intently
when all seemingly was quiet.

CHIEF STANDING BEAR

Sit quietly doing nothing,
spring comes,
and the grass grows
by itself.

ZEN WISDOM

You do not need to leave your room.
Remain sitting at your table and listen.
Do not even listen, simply wait.
Do not even wait, be still and solitary.
The world will freely offer itself to you
to be unmasked, it has no choice.
It will roll in ecstasy at your feet.

FRANZ KAFKA

The goal of a healthy solitude is love;
love and acceptance of ourselves as we are
and where we are,
and love and compassion for others.

DOROTHY PAYNE

When man sits,
then the coarse passions subside and
the luminous mind arises in awareness:
Thus consciousness is illuminated.

MEISTER ECKHART

Settle in solitude,
and you will come upon Him
in yourself.

— J. K. Coomaraswamy —



Pearls lie not on the seashore.

If thou desirest one
thou must dive for it.

CHINESE SAYING

So it is that every spiritual healing
is the result of one individual sitting
in the Silence, quietly, peacefully waiting,
and then the Spirit comes
through the consciousness of that one –
the voice thunders in the Silence,
and the Earth melts.

JOEL S. GOLDSMITH

The foolish reject what they see;
The wise reject what they think.

ZEN SAYING

What is this life, if
Full of care,
We have no time
To stand and stare?

W H DAVIES

This is what is strange –
that friends, even passionate love,
are not my real life unless
there is time alone in which to discover
what is happening
or has happened.

MAY SARTON

Teach us to care
and not to care.
Teach us to sit still.

1990



We must, like a painter,
take time to stand back from our work,
to be still, and thus see what's what ...
True repose is standing back to survey
the activities that fill our lives.

WILLIAM MCNAMARA

Praying is not about asking;
it's about listening ...
It is just opening your eyes to see
what was there all along.

CHAGDUD TULKU RINPOCHE

My home is
my retreat and resting place from the wars.
I try to keep this corner
as a haven against the tempest outside,
as I do another corner of my soul.

MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE

Your vision will become clear only
when you can look into your heart.

Who looks outside, dreams.

Who looks inside, awakes.

CARL JUNG

Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise
From outward things, what'er you may believe.
There is an inmost center in us all,
Where truth abides in fullness.

ROBERT BROWNING

THE ZEN OF
CHANGE



Love not what you are
but what you may become.

MIGUEL DE CERVANTES

Be not afraid of growing slowly.

Be afraid of standing still.

CHINESE PROVERB



The purpose of life is to live it,
to taste experience to the utmost,
to reach out eagerly and without fear
for newer and richer experience.

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

Only in growth, reform and change,
paradoxically enough,
is true security to be found.

ANNE MORROW LINDBERGH

If our nature is permitted to guide our life,
we grow healthy, fruitful and happy.

AGROFARM MARCONI



Life is change.
Growth is optional.
Choose wisely.

KAREN KAISER CLARK

My business is not to remake myself,
But make the absolute best
of what God made.

ROBERT BROWNING

I think these difficult times
have helped me to understand better
than before how infinitely rich and
beautiful life is in every way,
and that so many things
one goes around worrying about
are of no importance whatever.

ISAK DINESEN (KAREN BLIXEN)

We deem those happy
who from the experience of life
have learned to bear its ills
without being overcome by them.

CARL JUNG

Examine myself as I may,

I can no longer find the slightest trace of
the anxious, agitated individual of those years,
so discontented with herself,
so out of patience with others.

GEORGE SAND (AMANDINE DUPIN)

The real voyage of discovery
consists not in seeking new landscapes
but in having new eyes.

MARVEL PRODUCTIONS



You must learn day by day,
year by year,
to broaden your horizons.
The more things you love,
the more you are interested in,
the more you enjoy,
the more you are indignant about –
the more you have left
if anything goes wrong.

ETHEL BARRYMORE

We shrink from change;
yet is there anything that can
come into being without it?
Change is part of nature itself.

Do you not see, then, that change in yourself
is of the same order, and no less necessary
than to Nature?

MARCUS AURELIUS

We must always change, renew,
rejuvenate ourselves;
otherwise we harden.

JOHANN VON GOETHE

The only way
to make sense out of change
is to plunge with it,
move with it,
and join the dance.

JOHN WILLY

He who is not
satisfied with himself
will grow.

HEBREW PROVERB

Moments of guilt,
moments of contrition,
moments when we are lacking in self-esteem,
moments when we are bearing the trial
of being displeasing to ourselves,
are essential to our growth.

M SCOTT PECK

Every small positive change
we make in ourselves
repays us in confidence
in the future.

ALICE WALKER

THE ZEN OF
NATURE



The autumn mountains

Here and there

Smoke rising

GYODAI

Autumn's colors dropping from branches
in masses of falling leaves.
Cold clouds bringing rain
into the crannies of the mountains:
Everyone was born
with the same sort of eyes –
Why do mine keep seeing things
as a Zen Koan?



Contemplating the clear moon
Reflecting a mind empty as the open sky –
Drawn by its beauty,
I lose myself
In the shadows it casts.

DOGEN

A lightning flash –
The sound of water drops
Falling through bamboo

BUSON

With plum blossom scent,
This sudden sun emerges
Along a mountain trail

— DASHI



Although I try to hold the single thought
of Buddha's teaching in my heart,
I cannot help but hear the
many crickets' voices calling as well.

ISUMI SHIKIBU

The blue mountain bordering the sea
does not move,
but the mind of the bird over the waves
breaks free
and follows the course of the river.

Village has grown old –
Not a single house without
Persimmon trees

BASHO

You ask why I make
my home in the mountain forest,
and I smile, and am silent,
and even my soul remains quiet;
it lives in the other world
which no one owns.
The peach trees blossom.
The water flows.

LI PO

Every part of this earth is sacred to my people.

Every shining pine needle,
every sandy shore.

Every mist in the dark woods,
every clearing and
every humming insect
is holy in
the memory of my people.

CHIEF SEATH

FROM A LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE USA, 1883

Love all God's creations,
both the whole and every grain of sand.
Love every leaf, every ray of light.
Love the animals, love the plants,
love each separate thing.
If thou love each thing
thou wilt perceive the mystery
of God in all ...

FEDOR DOSTOEVSKY

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society, where none intrudes,
By the deep Sea, and music in its roar.
I love not Man the less, but Nature more.

LORD BYRON

The thunderstorm breaks up,
One tree lit by setting sun,
A cicada cry

2000



Along the mountain road
Somehow it tugs at my heart
A wild violet

BASHO

Lighting the candles
In the thatched temple
Plum blossoms fall

CYODAI

I am one

Who eats his breakfast,
Gazing at the morning-glories.

BASHO

Come forth into the light of things,
Let nature be your teacher.

—WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



Like the little stream
Making its way through the mossy crevices
I, too, quietly
Turn clear and transparent.

The wind has settled, the blossoms have fallen;
Birds sing, the mountains grow dark –
Thus is the wondrous power of Buddhism.

RYOKAN

Chilling autumn rains

Curtain Mount Fuji, then make it

More beautiful to see

WASU

Gentle as a dead friend's hand
Resting on my shoulder
This autumn sunshine

KUSADAO

Evening bell:

Persimmons pelt

The temple garden

SHIKI

Under this tree, where light and shade
Speckle the grass like a Thrush's breast,
Here, in this green and quiet place,
I give myself to peace and rest.

W H DAVIS

On that far mountain
On the slope below the peak,
Cherries are in flower.
Oh, let the mountain mists
Not arise to hide the scene.

OF SAKI MIBAYASHI

If only I could share it:
The soft sound of snow
Falling late at night
At this old temple.

LOUISE LAM

If your hermitage
Is deep in the mountains
Surely the moon,
Flowers and crimson leaves
Will become your friends.

Wild peonies
Now at their peak in glorious full bloom:
Too precious to pick
Too precious not to pick.

Dozing on horseback
Smoke from the tea-fires
Drifts to the moon

BASHO

THE
GREAT ONENESS



Earth, mountains, rivers – hidden in
this nothingness.

In the nothingness – earth, mountains,
rivers revealed.

Spring flowers, winter snows:

There's no being or non-being, nor
denial itself.

SAISHO

The One and the All.

Mingle and move without discriminating.
Live in this awareness and you'll stop worrying
about not being perfect.

SENG T'SAN

I believe God is everything ...

Everything that is or ever was or ever will be.

And when you can feel that,
and be happy to feel that, you've found it ...

My first step from the old white man was trees.

Then air. Then birds. Then other people.

But one day when I was sitting quiet
and feeling like a motherless child,

which I was, it came to me:
that feeling of being part of everything,

not separate at all.
I knew that if I cut a tree,
my arm would bleed.
And I laughed and I cried
and I ran all round the house.
I knew just what it was.
In fact, when it happens,
you can't miss it.

ALICE WALKER *The Color Purple*

It is as if

a raindrop fell from heaven

into a stream or fountain

and became one with the water in it

so that never again can the raindrop

be separated from the water of the stream;

or as if a little brook ran into the sea

and there was thenceforward no means
of distinguishing its water from the ocean;
or as if a brilliant light came into a room
through two windows and though it
comes in divided between them,
it forms a single light inside.

ST. TERESA



How can the drops of water
Know themselves to be a river?

ZEN SAYING

You are Brahman,
I am Brahman,
the whole universe is Brahman.
Whatever you are doing,
realize this truth at all times.
This Brahman or the self alone
is the reality in all beings,
even as clay is the real substance
in thousands of pots.

Above, below and around you, all is
Spontaneously existing, for
There is nowhere which is
Outside Buddha-Mind.

CHANDLER

Thirty spokes join together in the hub.
It is because of what is not there
that the cart is useful.
Clay is formed into a vessel.
It is because of its emptiness
that the vessel is useful.
Cut doors and windows to make a room.
It is because of its emptiness
that the room is useful.
Therefore, what is present is used for profit.
But it is in absence that there is usefulness.

Death,
like birth,
is one of Nature's secrets;
the same elements that have been combined
are then dispersed ... For being endowed
with mind it is no anomaly,
nor in any way inconsistent
with the plan of their creation.

MARCUS AURELIUS

In darkness light exists,
do not look with a dark view.

In light darkness exists,
do not look with a luminous view.

Light and darkness create an opposition,
Yet depend on each other just as the step
Taken by the right leg depends on the step
Taken by the left.

Where beauty is,
then there is ugliness;
where right is, also there is wrong.
Knowledge and ignorance are interdependent;
delusion and enlightenment
condition each other.
Since olden times it has been so.
How could it be otherwise now?

RYOKAN

All beings by nature are Buddha,
as ice by nature is water;
apart from water there is no ice,
apart from beings,
no Buddha.

HAKUIN

ZEN
ENLIGHTENMENT



He who loves
does not think about his own life;
to love truly,
a man must forget about himself.
If your desires do not accord with your spirit,
sacrifice them,
and you will come to the end of your journey.
If the body of desire obstructs the way,
reject it; then fix your eyes
in front and contemplate.

A luminous moon,
the wind in the pine,
a long evening,
a transcendent view:
but what is the meaning of this?
What is the meaning of life?
Value judgments are destructive
to our proper business,
which is curiosity
and awareness.

I see people in the world

Throw away their lives lusting after things,

Never able to satisfy their desires,

Falling into deep despair

And torturing themselves.

Even if they get what they want

How long will they be able to enjoy it?

For one heavenly pleasure

They suffer ten torments of hell,

Binding themselves more firmly

to the grindstone.

Such people are like monkeys
Frantically grasping for the moon in the water
And then falling into a whirlpool.
How endlessly those caught up
in the floating world
Suffer.

RYOKAN

Keep your heart clear and transparent

And you will never be bound.

A single disturbed thought,

Creates ten thousand distractions.

Let myriad things captivate you

And you'll go further and further astray.

How painful to see people

All wrapped up in themselves.

RYOKAN

To get rid of your passions
is not nirvana –
to look upon them as no matter of yours,
that is nirvana.

— Shunryu Suzuki —

As for the people and affairs
of the contemporary world,
they hold no attraction for me.

If in becoming a teacher one thinks only
of wealth and honor and is not concerned
about the importance of literature,
it would be better if we had no teachers.

If in being a friend one thinks only
of power and profit and cares nothing
about the frank exchange of opinions,
it would be better if we had no friends.

So I close my gate,
shut my door,
hum poems
and sing songs
by myself.

YOSHISHIGE NO YATSUTANE



If your house
is your most important possession
then it is your prison.
Your house should be
a hostel you stay in
day after day.

ROBERT ALLEN

Attraction and aversion are two feelings
that keep people within the bondage
of ignorant repetitive behavior ...
If people do not crave to be pleased,
they will not be displeased.
What causes mental suffering
is not the environment
but the mind itself.

MUSO KOKUSHI

He who knows
he has enough
is rich.

(AOI21)

It is not the body,
not the personality that is the true self.

The true self is eternal.
Even on the point of death
we can say to ourselves,
'My true self is free.
I cannot be contained'.

MARCUS AURELIUS

The true value of a human being
can be found in the degree
to which he has attained
liberation from the self.

ALBERT EINSTEIN

He who wherever he goes is attached
to no person and to no place by ties of flesh;
who accepts good and evil alike,
neither welcoming the one
nor shrinking from the other –
take it that such a one has attained
Perfection.

Beyond the white clouds
a blue mountain.
A traveler goes
beyond that mountain.

— J. K. ROWLING —

To attain Buddhahood
we must scatter
life's aims and objects
to the winds.

ZEN TRADITION

There is no path
that leads to Zen.
How can you follow a path
to where you are
right now?

ROBERT ALLEN

It is not that I do not wish
To mix with others
But living alone in freedom
Is a better path for me.

When I think about the misery
Of those in this world,
Their sadness becomes mine.

Oh, that my monk's robe
Was wide enough
To gather up all
The suffering people
In this floating world.

RYOKAN

You wander from room to room
Hunting for the diamond necklace
That is already around your neck!

RUMI

There is no beginning to practice
Nor end to enlightenment;
There is no beginning to enlightenment
Nor end to practice.

—Dogen

Three things are essential:
great doubt,
great faith, and
great perseverance.

ZEN SAYING

Be soft in your practice.

Think of the method as a fine silvery stream,
not a raging waterfall.

Follow the stream, have faith in its course.

It will go its own way,
meandering here, trickling there.

It will find the grooves, the cracks, the crevices.

Just follow it.

Never let it out of your sight.

It will take you.

The Perfect Way knows no difficulties
Except that it refuses to make preferences;
Only when freed from hate and love,
It reveals itself fully and without disguise.

SOSAN

The mind is very difficult to see,
Very delicate and subtle;
It moves and lands wherever it pleases.
The wise one should guard his mind,
For a guarded mind brings happiness.

—BUDDHIST SAYING—

Beneath, the mountain stream flows

On and on without end.

If one's Zen mind is like this

Seeing into one's own nature

cannot be far off.

HAKUIN

Words cannot describe everything.

The heart's message
cannot be delivered in words.

If you receive words literally you will be lost.

If you try to explain with words
you will not attain enlightenment
in this life.

MU MOON

Where there is great doubt,
there will be great awakening;
small doubt,
small awakening,
no doubt,
no awakening.

ZEN SAYING

To gain enlightenment,
you must want it
as much as a man whose head
is held under water
wants air.

ZEN SAYING

Enlightenment is like the moon
reflected on the water.

The moon does not get wet,
nor is the water broken.

Although its light is wide and great,
the moon is reflected
even in a puddle an inch wide.

The whole moon and the entire sky
are reflected in one dewdrop
on the grass.

DOGEN

Just as you see yourself in a mirror,
Form and reflection look at each other.
You are not the reflection
Yet the reflection is you.

THUSAN

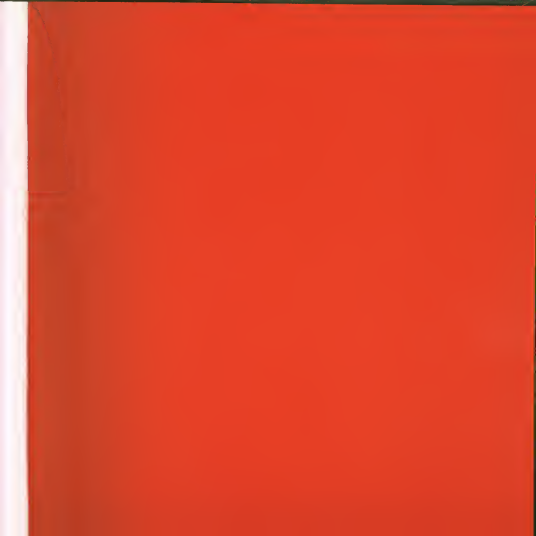
In original nature

There is no this and that.

The great Round Mirror

Has no likes or dislikes.

SEUNG SAHN



Sit quietly doing nothing,
spring comes,
and the grass grows
by itself.

ZEN WISDOM

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